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AUTHOR McMullan, Bernard J.; Snyder, Phyllis
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ABSTRACT

There is a growing national movement in which schools and businesses have become allies in efforts to improve education. Many school-business partnerships focus on disadvantaged youth in urban areas. Three popular models for these collaborations are the following: (1) the pairing of a business with a single school; (2) collaborative efforts that focus on entire educational systems; and (3) collaborations intended to increase employability through the provision of special classes and/or part-time jobs. Nine programs were studied in order to ascertain their efficacy in improving the chances of success for at risk youth. The components, population, and type of collaboration are presented for each program. The major findings are the following: (1) the programs provide youth with experiences which show the link between schooling and employment; (2) while some programs exist in name only and others merely serve public relations functions, many are rigorous and intensive; (3) personal growth and employability have increased for participants; (4) many schools have been improved physically, academically, and affectively; and (5) the programs have become catalysts for educational change. (VM)

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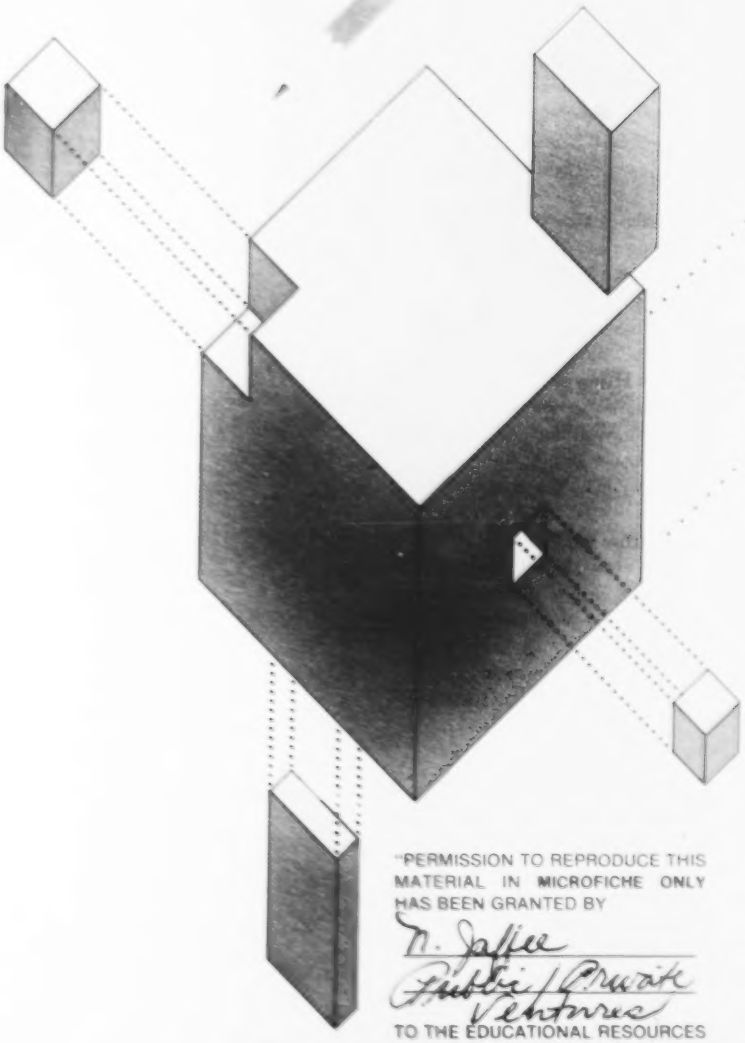

Working Together for At-Risk Youth

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Public/Private Ventures

399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 592-9099

Allies in Education

Schools and Businesses Working Together for At-Risk Youth

Summary and Conclusions

by Bernard J. McMullan
Phyllis Snyder

Fall 1987

FOREWORD

As a school board member in a New York suburb in the early 1970s, I recall not a single instance when the board invited the business community to discuss issues affecting our public school system. Nor did business extend its hand to help. As this important volume demonstrates, times have markedly changed.

Allies in Education: Findings from the National Assessment points to significant progress in what is today a growing national movement that unites schools and businesses in common cause. Education leaders, beleaguered by eroding political support and declining resources for public schools, have wisely reached beyond the schools for assistance. And in the business community they have found a powerful ally. Business, for its part, has identified education as a significant factor in the nation's economic competitiveness, and corporations are looking to the schools to prepare workers and citizens to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

But what about the educationally disadvantaged--the nearly 30 percent of the school population whom the system has failed? In Allies in Education, Public/Private Ventures breaks new ground with the first major research to focus exclusively on school/business partnerships that serve the disadvantaged. By evaluating nine of the most successful partnerships, the publication offers cogent examples of ways in which educators and business leaders are providing resources for the schools, job opportunities for disadvantaged youngsters, and improvements in the delivery of education. But the study frankly acknowledges that school-business partnerships have been deficient in their ability to reach students who are most at risk of educational failure.

There is a large unfinished agenda for business and the schools. The problems of children in need call for collaborations that extend beyond the traditional boundaries of education. Clearly, preparation for education and employment must begin in the earliest years of life, long before formal schooling begins. And once in school, the disadvantaged will require a wide array of social services that must be available on the school site or accessible in the community. This suggests the need for a fundamental restructuring of the schools in which business--joined by teachers, school administrators, political leaders and parents--must play a part.

Business increasingly regards education not as an expense but as an investment in the future. To be sure, corporate resources can be leveraged with public and private funds to broaden opportunities to assist the educationally disadvantaged. But the greater challenge for corporate America is to use its persuasive voice to advance public policies and programs that serve the millions of children who lack advocates in the political process. The educationally disadvantaged cannot speak for themselves; business leadership must speak for them.

Sol Hurwitz
Senior Vice President
Committee for Economic
Development

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Partnerships between schools and businesses are receiving increasing attention as a strategy to boost the effectiveness of the public schools. Many of these partnerships focus either directly or indirectly on disadvantaged youth, in response to a growing concern that schools are not preparing thousands of primarily poor, urban, minority youth for a successful transition into the labor force. A number of questions surround such collaborations: What are their key components? Whom do they serve? What role does business play? What effects do the partnerships have? In short, do they work?

To identify the elements of these collaborations and assess their potential for improving the preparation of disadvantaged youth, P/PV undertook a three-year assessment of school/business partnerships in 1984. We chose to study nine programs that represented the best examples of approaches being employed in serving economically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk youth. The programs chosen for study were among the few collaborations we encountered that met the following criteria: by 1984, they had been in continued operation for two or more years; they served students who are educationally at risk or economically disadvantaged; they had demonstrable, strong involvement from a business partner; and they involved more than 50 youth.

Volume II of Allies in Education: Schools and Businesses Working Together for At-Risk Youth presents case studies of these nine collaborations. Volume I, subtitled Findings from the National Assessment, analyzes the school/business phenomenon as it is represented by the nine programs. It places recent school/business collaborations in the context of partnerships that have existed between education and business throughout this century; characterizes the various activities and interventions that collaborations have undertaken; describes the role of business in the partnerships; analyzes the partnerships' effects on students, schools, business partners and education in general; and discusses the implications of these findings for collaborative efforts both now and in the future.

The assessment was supported by The CIGNA Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Exxon Education Foundation, IBM Corporation, The Pew Memorial Trust and The Rockefeller Foundation.

THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

From the small group of programs that met our study criteria, P/PV selected nine collaborations employing a wide variety of approaches to serving at-risk youth. The nine included examples of three major models:

- The most widespread type of collaboration involves the pairing of a business or group of businesses with a single school. In this type of collaboration, the business partner contributes such forms of assistance as mentors and tutors for students, grants for teachers, equipment, and maintenance help. Many also sponsor schoolwide awards and contests. Representing the "adopt-a-school" model in the study are the Tenneco/Jefferson Davis Business-School Partnership in Houston and the Primerica/Martin Luther King, Jr. High School Partnership in New York City.

- Collaborative efforts that focus on entire educational systems at either the local or state level are the most infrequent type of program. In most of these systemwide efforts, business contributions involve an infusion of new resources (grants, job opportunities, volunteers), increased community support for public education and special programs for at-risk youth. This type of program is represented in the study by the Boston Compact, the Atlanta Partnership of Business and Education--which aim to improve local school districts--and the State of California's Regional Occupational Centers and Programs, a rare statewide education initiative that involves business collaboration.

- More numerous are collaborations intended to increase the employability of economically disadvantaged youth through the provision of special classes and part-time jobs outside the traditional high school curriculum. These student-focused programs serve small groups of carefully targeted youth in order to provide individualized attention. The programs are usually of short duration, serving youth only in their last one or two years of high school. Representations of this model in the study are the Off-Campus Work/Study Program in St. Louis, New Horizons in Richmond, and Teen Opportunities Promote Success (TOPS) in Birmingham. The Philadelphia High School Academies are also in this category; however, they differ from the other student-focused programs in that they serve larger numbers of youth, enroll them for their entire high school career and integrate the teaching of academic and vocational subjects.

While all the programs in the study can be classified as one of these three models, student-focused elements are often found in systemic interventions, most notably in the Boston and Atlanta programs, and in most adopt-a-school partnerships. Key characteristics and components of the nine partnerships are presented in Table 1 on pages 4 and 5.

METHODOLOGY

P/PV's study of the nine programs was grounded in qualitative techniques: site visits, observations of program operations, structured and semistructured interviews, and reviews of program materials. Site visits were conducted in 1985 and 1986. When available, descriptive and quantitative data were collected. In two larger programs--the Boston Compact and the Philadelphia High School Academies--more extensive quantitative efforts were undertaken to assess student outcomes.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Below, we draw together the study's most critical findings and place them in a larger context, based on the following three questions, which frame our understanding of these partnerships:

- What is their significance for at-risk youth and their educational progress?
- What concrete effects do they have on at-risk students and on the educational process?
- What is the potential of school/business collaborations to improve public education?

THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

In many instances, school/business partnerships have been the catalyst for renewed interest in education and public support for special programs for economically disadvantaged youth. The collaborative efforts we observed were initiated in response to a growing concern that schools were not preparing thousands of primarily poor, urban, minority youth for a successful transition to the labor force. School/business collaborations seek community support for improved education in the public schools and attempt to bridge the gap between youths' skills and employers' requirements while youth are still in school. As an example of increased community support, the number of signers of the Boston Compact expanded from 15 corporate supporters in 1982 to several hundred businesses, unions, colleges, universities and other organizations by 1987.

Another significant aspect of the partnerships is that they provide youth with direct evidence of the critical link between educational achievement and making a living, especially in terms of getting, keeping and prospering in a job. Traditional employment and training programs for in-school youth do not explicitly reinforce the idea that staying in school, doing well and graduating has a known payoff. These programs are notable because they increase personal attention paid to students who normally received little special treatment in traditional school settings.

TABLE 1. PROGRAMS STUDIED AS PART OF SCHOOL/BUSINESS COLLABORATION PROJECT

Student-Focused Programs	Key Program Components	Selection Criteria and Number of Youth Served	Business Involvement
OFF CAMPUS WORK/STUDY PROGRAM (Careers in the Classroom): St. Louis (1968)	Emphasis placed on preemployment skills and work behavior Students attend classes at the worksite in space provided by employer; students work during afternoon. Year-round program.	Seniors only 150-200	Business provides part-time jobs and classroom space. Those involved are 5 large St. Louis corporations, a consortium of area banks and the city government.
NEW HORIZONS: Richmond (1980)	School-year classes emphasize work maturity; some basic skills classes during summer. 24-month program including summers.	11th- and 12th-graders, JTPA-eligible, 80 % attendance, "C" average 50 year-round and 60-70 during summer	Business provides part-time jobs with considerable on-the-job supervision. Approximately 17 businesses in Richmond are involved.
TEEN OPPORTUNITIES PROMOTE SUCCESS (TOPS): Birmingham (1981)	Separate summer and year-round programs are offered. Both summer and school year classes emphasize work maturity, career awareness and job search skills. Afternoon employment during school year and summer.	Junior and seniors with "C" averages, strong attendance records, JTPA-eligibility, and lacking skills needed for employment. 45 year-round; 110 during summers	Business assists in program management and 74 area businesses hire students.
PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES: Philadelphia (1969)	Four academies: Business, Electrical, Automotive and Health. Structured curriculum with few electives. Emphasis on integrating both vocational training and basic skills in all courses. Students eligible to work during junior and senior years. Four-year program housed within comprehensive high schools.	Youth are drawn from host high school service area. Criteria: low academic achievement (below grade level skills in reading and math), test scores between 20th and 50th percentile within district, interest in vocational area and moderate to good attendance. Academies are sited in 10 high schools. 1,200 to 1,500 enrolled	Business provides substantial financial support, service on curriculum and program advisory boards, provision of jobs, service on "school teams" and part-time jobs for juniors and seniors. Supporters include many of the largest companies in the city. Over 100 businesses are involved.
School- and System-Focused Programs			
PRIMERICA/MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: New York City (1982)	Enhanced adopt-a-school program involving awarding grants to the school for educational and school spirit activities and sponsoring special programs. Some individual mentoring by employees.	All students in high school eligible to participate. About 300 students directly participate in any partnership activities. Total school population: 2800	Substantial financial support from Primerica. ($350,000 over four years).

TENNECO/JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: Houston (1981)	Enhanced adopt-a-school program involving substantial participation by employees as mentors, teachers aides and counselors. Considerable corporate involvement for school environment improvement. Summer job placements in nonprofits funded by Tenneco. Employability workshops.	Entire school benefits from program. 100 juniors/seniors are placed in summer positions as one part of the program. School size: 1200	Tenneco involvement is substantial both financially ($625,000 over four years) and in terms of volunteering by employees. More than 100 volunteer mentors.
REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CENTERS/ PROGRAMS: State of California (1968)	Supplemental vocational education system allowing students to take vocationally oriented courses across normal school district boundaries. Some in-class work maturity training. Individual job placements as part of cooperative education component.	All students (and adults) aged 16 or older are eligible. 270,000 youth served 30,000 adults	Business involvement includes service on local advisory boards, provision of work/study opportunities. Business also is the source for many instructors and often provides access to corporate facilities and equipment for classroom and training.
ATLANTA PARTNERSHIP OF BUSINESS AND EDUCATION: Atlanta (1981)	Umbrella, coordinative body to oversee activities of a variety of school improvement and assistance activities. The Partnership runs several programs directly, the most important of which is the citywide Adopt A School program. It also supports a citywide Adopt-A-Student program.	All students in Atlanta public schools may benefit from Partnership. Adopt A School program encompasses 103 schools and programs. Adopt-A-Student program serves about 150 to 200 poorly performing seniors each year.	Partnership's Board of Directors is composed of leaders of major Atlanta businesses. Through the Adopt A School program, businesses are paired with individual schools and programs offering monetary and in-kind contributions. Through the Adopt-A-Student program, individual businesspeople are recruited to serve as mentors.
BOSTON COMPACT: Boston (1982)	School improvement initiative implemented by (1) setting specific academic performance standards for the schools and (2) setting specific employment objectives for the Boston corporate community. Key features include a specialist in high schools to match students with jobs, a school development officer to coordinate school improvement efforts and secure resources from the community, and individual partnerships between schools and businesses.	17 high schools involved 1500 youth hired in summer of 1984, 750 permanent hires in 1985.	As part of its agreement with the Boston schools, businesses provided initial leadership for the intervention. It supplies scholarship support, offers in-kind contributions through individual school partnerships, offers substantial numbers of part-time and summer jobs and serves as a constituency of public education.

The most consistent and central role played by business in most collaborations is providing youth with work opportunities after school, during the summer or after graduation. Participation by business ensures that youth, many of whom would have limited opportunities to gain work experience on their own, are placed in jobs and learn that they can succeed. This contribution has made the connection between school and future employment vivid for participants.

In viewing the growing significance of these partnerships, however, some observers have questioned whether collaborations should play as important a role as they appear to have assumed. Three concerns have been raised.

The first concern is whether the initiatives have sufficient educational or programmatic substance or are simply an avenue for public relations. Our reconnaissance disclosed a number of programs that exist in name only, the bulk of whose budget is dedicated to the production of glossy brochures and videotapes. We also identified collaborations in which a business appears to be primarily concerned with developing good community and public relations. Because of such programs, there is a tendency to dismiss all collaborations and question the motives of all principal actors. To do so would unjustly discount the commitment of many of the businesspeople involved and ignore the impact and potential that many programs have shown.

Our observations of the nine highly regarded initiatives profiled in the second volume of this study, which were drawn on as background for this report, demonstrate that many interventions are quite intensive and that business participation, in terms of leadership, contributions and direct intervention, is often substantial. We have seen many examples of business commitment, including not only charitable contributions but investments of executive, managerial and staff time and resources for addressing complex educational issues. Many businesses also marshal community and political support on behalf of public education. The partnerships we observed bring together a large number of individuals who devote significant time and energy to serving at-risk youth. Although they do not eschew publicity, we found that most program supporters do not fully capitalize on the potential for widespread recognition engendered by these programs. In fact, one criticism leveled at several initiatives is that they do not sufficiently publicize their efforts in an attempt to recruit more youth and business supporters.

A second concern about school/business collaborations is that business involvement could cause a narrowing of the emphasis of education toward serving the needs of business or employers. We see no evidence of this in either design or implementation of the programs studied. A major portion of direct business contributions have been targeted to support cultural, social, humanities

and arts programs, and traditional extracurricular activities, such as sports and clubs. And while vocational courses are offered in a number of programs, it should be noted that at-risk youth in those programs are receiving vocational training normally reserved for better-performing students. Thus, a number of collaborations make it possible for less academically able students to obtain skills training.

A third concern is that the professional standing of teachers could be jeopardized by the intrusion of businesspeople in the classrooms. According to comments made by administrators and teachers during site observations, business involvement has had exactly the opposite effect. Despite initial fears among some that performance would be evaluated according to an unforgiving "bottom-line" template, teachers found that businesses came to collaborations with few preconceived notions about the problems of urban schools. In fact, school/business collaborations have frequently served as a means of educating a receptive audience of business and community leaders about the complexities of the problems facing public education.

Far from demeaning the professional standing of teachers, collaborations often seem to affirm and strengthen it. Our findings indicate that morale has improved as a result of many partnerships, largely because teachers had an opportunity to meet and discuss common problems and issues with other professionals in the community. There is surely no danger that school/business collaborations will replace existing educational systems. Even the most sophisticated and elaborate partnerships are designed to assist or augment schools' efforts. All the programs recognize that teachers will remain the primary providers of education and instruction.

School/business collaborations have emerged as significant primarily because they act as a catalyst for wider support for public education and can provide at-risk youth with experiential evidence of the link between academic achievement and eventual employment. We found no justification for concerns expressed by some critics that many collaborations are paper tigers, narrow educational opportunities, or are unwelcome intrusions on the work of professional educators. On the contrary, we found that the partnerships we studied are substantial interventions with reasonable educational and training components that enhance rather than replace existing curricula. Most teachers and administrators welcome the additional resources collaborations provide to students, teachers and schools.

THEIR EFFECTS

The school/business collaborations in our study have enabled schools to better serve at-risk youth in their communities by providing them with the following:

- Increased access to employment opportunities and work experience not normally available to at-risk students;

- Coaching and preparation on behaviors necessary to find, obtain and keep a job; and

- Increased personal attention--through tutoring and mentoring, special classes and close supervision--to youth who are usually excluded from additional school support services.

In addition, many programs have benefited entire schools by:

- Upgrading the physical plant;

- Increasing resources for enhancing existing programs or adding new ones;

- Increasing teacher morale; and

- Creating a new, knowledgeable constituency for public education.

Despite these benefits, there are clear limits on the impact that school/business collaborations can have. First, the collaborations are not alternatives to regular educational programs; even the most highly developed and comprehensive programs are designed to complement institutional programs and services. Although some impacts of the programs we studied are substantial, all build on a preexisting educational structure.

Second, while school/business collaborations can act as a catalyst for educational improvement, they alone cannot revitalize urban schools. Such a change must be grounded in the educational system itself--in its teachers, administrators, and leaders, and in political, community and parental advocacy for education. School/business collaborations can awaken concerns about public education and add an important dimension of legitimacy and urgency to educational reform, but they cannot bear the burden of such reform alone.

Third, school/business collaborations, even those that recruit from a disadvantaged student population, rarely serve the most disadvantaged or at-risk students. Two related factors, the emphasis on student employment and the requirements for job placement, contribute to this lack of focus on highest-risk youth.

The central substantive contribution of business is employment during the school year or during the summer. Typically, jobs are

offered through these programs to high school students in their junior or senior year. Almost by definition, students who have advanced this far in high school already have a track record of succeeding academically, since they have passed the critical periods when the highest number of students drop out. Both partners defend the practice. Schools argue that only juniors and seniors have made enough progress toward graduation to allow them to devote time to holding a job in the afternoon; businesses, citing minimum working age standards, argue that they can only offer employment to older students. The end result, however, is that school/business collaborations whose strongest component is the provision of adolescent work experience do not serve students when they are at greatest risk of dropping out.

The partnerships forged between schools and businesses are often tenuous arrangements that depend on success for survival. This relationship can cause programs to exclude students in greatest need and at greatest risk. For example, program administrators and schools are very concerned that the good will extended to them by business not be jeopardized. This concern is often reflected in their careful selection of students whom they believe can benefit from the program and their selective nomination of only the best program participants for jobs with business supporters. Thus, students at greatest risk are excluded from the program and participants exhibiting insufficient progress are not placed. Businesses often foster this selectivity by complaining when students' work performance is inadequate and, at times, withdrawing participation if the program is complicated by ill-prepared or unmotivated youth.

Since business are in effect the givers in partnerships while schools and youth are the receivers, it is not surprising that our study yielded scant evidence of direct or immediate benefits to businesses. The following apparent benefits to businesses were considerable but were found to be of little significance:

- Student workers are paid at lower rates than regular employees, but additional training and supervision costs offset any wage savings.

- While some student workers eventually gain permanent status, there is no formal process for this advancement and few students are involved. Businesses have not developed a reliable method for recruiting and screening program students as potential employees. Also, while businesses sometimes become involved in vocational curriculum development, students are trained according to industry specifications and do not necessarily join a company sponsoring the partnership.

- Although students and supervisors often develop important relationships, the students' visibility in the company is frequently very low and their presence in the organization may be overlooked by other employees.

Despite the lack of immediate benefits, businesses report that they anticipate long-term benefits from participation, such as improved public relations, a better-trained work force, and an improved social and economic environment in which to conduct business.

THEIR POTENTIAL

Business involvement in education, particularly in school/business collaborations, has increasingly been heralded as an important avenue for improving the nation's schools. Our endorsement is more cautious.

There are three principal roles in which school/business collaborations have shown potential for addressing educational reform and serving at-risk youth: as a catalyst for educational change and improvement; as a source of new incentives to keep at-risk youth in school; and as a source of advocacy and support for public education. Each role bears further discussion.

A Catalyst for Educational Change

There is evidence that school/business partnerships that focus on schools or systems can serve as a catalyst for sustained school or educational improvement. For example, the Boston Compact has approached urban education as a community issue requiring a community response. Although not all its objectives for educational improvement have been achieved, the Compact initiative has placed public education on the agenda of both business and the community, and increased attendance and improved academic achievement have been observed in some schools. However, improvements in dropout rates have remained elusive. Similar results have been observed at the school level in Houston and New York City, where adopt-a-school programs have emerged as a city-wide business response to problems in the public schools.

In contrast, programs that focus primarily on student employment have limited value in effecting overall educational improvement, though their immediate impact on the students involved should not be discounted. As separate, almost independent programs, their effect on the delivery of education in public schools is minimal.

Provision of Jobs and Scholarships to At-Risk Youth

School/business collaborations have demonstrated innovation in the incentives they offer individual at-risk youth. While their

emphasis on work maturity instruction coupled with direct employment experience is frequently found in vocational training programs, the participation of at-risk youth in a substantive intervention of this type is rare and represents an important innovation.

Collaborative programs have also provided substantial resources for scholarship support. Indeed, such support is the most popular recent trend in school/business collaborations. In Boston, a multimillion dollar endowment was established to provide "last dollar" grants to students entering college; in Cleveland, students can amass scholarship credits in recognition of passing grades in high school; as part of the I Have a Dream initiative inspired by Eugene Lang, business leaders in New York and other communities offer college scholarships and social support services programs designed to keep youth in school. Again, the interventions themselves are not unique, but their availability to at-risk youth is. Although such efforts are still in their infancy, they could become an important dimension of school/business partnerships in the future.

Becoming an Advocate and Constituency for Schools

Through their involvement in these partnerships, businesspeople often enrich their knowledge of school issues as a result of experiencing the problems facing schools first-hand, learning the complexities of issues in school reform, and confronting the need for effective and cost-efficient solutions to school problems. This well-grounded understanding, coupled with the political clout that businesses wield in local and state government, can make business a formidable and effective advocate for public education.

School/business partnerships thus have the potential for filling an important gap in public support of education. Many school/business partnerships have emerged in communities where those who were once the strongest advocates for improved public education have abandoned either the community or the school system. Many urban school districts have experienced dramatic decreases in the size of their school populations; the students who remain are often drawn primarily from low-income, recent immigrant and minority families. Historically, leadership and advocacy for improved public education has come from middle-class parents who once organized effectively to encourage improvements and voted the public funding necessary to accomplish them. A number of factors--including racial desegregation and the concomitant white flight to private, parochial and suburban schools--have changed the demographic composition of urban families with school-age children and have largely diluted the strong base of support for urban public education. For the most part, parents who still have children in public schools have not been able to muster

sufficient political strength to dictate movement toward reform of those schools.

To a great extent, the potential of business as a school improvement advocate has yet to be realized. However, we have seen evidence of such advocacy in the Boston Compact, a model that is beginning to see wide replication. An even more revealing example of the potential for business to become a political advocate is the recent testimony by chief executive officers of five major corporations before Congressional committees on behalf of continued and expanded funding of federal support for public education.

THE FUTURE

Beyond their effectiveness and current impact, the key questions that remain about school/business collaborations concern their future viability. In the past decade, literally thousands of partnerships between schools and businesses have emerged and been applauded. A variety of organizations--the Conference Board, the Committee for Economic Development, the National Alliance of Business--have identified school/business partnerships as one of the most important agenda issues for corporate America in this decade, and national newspapers have identified school/business partnerships as a major factor in both educational change and redefined corporate responsibility. Business publications have characterized school/business collaborations as an important innovation in the way businesses deal with their community environments. Educators' conferences and journals have dedicated substantial space to describing good partnerships and assessing the collaborations' impact on the field of education. Federal and state government education agencies have cited school/business collaborations as significantly supporting students and education.

The increase in attention paid to school/business collaborations can be correlated with a wave of new programs and program expansion across the country. Communities in which partnerships existed have expanded programs to serve more youth; other communities have attempted to replicate existing models; while others have proposed and implemented whole new approaches.

Recent years have also witnessed the emergence of a number of efforts to replicate promising models. Initial replications were generally confined to small demonstrations of student-focused initiatives, such as The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Partnership Projects. Recently, however, the National Alliance of Business has provided seed grants to seven communities so they can adopt the principles and lessons of the Boston Compact in an effort to improve their schools. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is about to award substantial five-year grants to five communities to stimulate large-scale structural reform in their educa-

tional and social service delivery systems. While such efforts are in their infancy, the fact that they are being pursued reflects a high degree of agreement on the need for continuing school/business collaboration.

In the short term, we anticipate critical changes in the nature of these collaborations. New individual partnerships between schools and businesses will likely be established as part of larger communitywide efforts to improve education. While individual pairings and special programs will continue to be an important form of business participation in education, such efforts will be melded into larger initiatives that seek to improve the delivery of education in general.

We also expect more collaborations to be established with clearly articulated educational and employment goals. Some may simulate the approach established in Boston; some will devise new indicators to assess progress. It is unlikely that these partnerships will be dissolved if goals are not quickly achieved. Community leaders in both education and business have grown much more sophisticated about the process of change in education and no longer expect quick-fix solutions. Since the problems were a long time in the making, the partnerships now being created to address them are intended for the long haul.

The issue for the longer term is whether the enthusiasm that has energized these good intentions is short-term and crisis-driven and will fade as new economic problems capture the interest of the business community and the pace of institutional change in public education asserts its deliberate course. It is clear that economic concerns have been a spur to business involvement in public education. Many large economic issues are being redefined as educational improvement issues. Educational problems are being identified as potential economic catastrophes. Such an environment is fertile for continuing school/business partnerships.

At the same time, however, private sector representatives who have become involved in public school affairs are learning how difficult it is to make the system more responsive to their concerns. Will their growing knowledge of public education help them to be patient with the slow pace of change? Will they continue to support existing collaborations--very few of which have survived for more than a few years--without the reinforcement of broader improvements? Will they add to or move on from individual collaborative programming to efforts to influence the development of public policy?

One determining factor will be the condition of the economy. If an economic downturn increases the availability of competent entry-level workers, the pressure on business to insure that schools produce such workers will decline. Increased economic

pressure would also distract business from collaborative efforts with the schools as the private sector attends to its own survival.

The second determinant will be the degree of public education's responsiveness to the need for broad change and improvement. Business can not be expected to continue its involvement in the schools if it perceives the effort to proceed in a vacuum. We have seen that business partners in collaborations do not set specific goals whose achievement is the prerequisite for participation. But how long will this last? The record so far shows that the partnerships that have survived more than a few years are those like the ones in Philadelphia and the state of California that <u>can</u> demonstrate significant accomplishment.

Finally, we doubt that the school/business collaborations themselves will be a crucial force in effecting radical structural reform in the delivery of education. Since the programs are grafted onto existing efforts, they do not have the structural position to fundamentally alter the delivery of education. Rather, we see that these collaborations have powerful potential--to create an educated influential constituency for public education.